



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

For immediate release

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Virginia's Heart Gallery to be displayed in Richmond

-- Gallery features portraits of foster children awaiting adoption --

WHAT: *Virginia's Heart Gallery* is coming to Richmond. The gallery is a unique photographic exhibit designed to open the hearts and homes of potential adoptive families for children in foster care. The gallery features 48 portraits capturing the spirit and personality of 61 children in an artistic and compelling way. The photographs were all taken by volunteer professional photographers.

Virginia's Heart Gallery has been on display at Norfolk Botanical Garden since Nov. 5, 2005. Since its opening, more than 60 families have submitted forms expressing their interest in adoption and 24 children featured are in the process of being placed with adoptive families.

WHO: The Virginia Department of Social Services and social services agencies in Chesapeake, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk and Virginia Beach have partnered to coordinate *Virginia's Heart Gallery*, featuring children from these and surrounding areas.

WHERE: The exhibit will open on Tuesday, Jan. 10 in the General Assembly building in Richmond, VA. The portraits will be on display in the *third floor West Conference Room* and in the *seventh floor West Conference Room* through the end of March.

WHEN: The General Assembly building is open to the public. ***Virginia's Heart Gallery will be displayed from 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. daily.*** *If the conference rooms are in use for meetings, the gallery will not be available for viewing.*

COST: Admission is free.

WHY: At any given time in the Commonwealth, more than 1,500 children are without a permanent place to call home and are awaiting adoption. *Virginia's Heart Gallery* is a way to raise awareness about adoption and the need for adoptive families. The goal is to find forever homes for the featured children in *Virginia's Heart Gallery*.

Visit *Virginia's Heart Gallery* online at: www.heartgalleryva.org.

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